

Breastfeeding

A Magical Bond of Love



A Social Marketing Campaign to Promote Breastfeeding Among Hispanic Women

Objective

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) has designed the Hispanic Breastfeeding Promotion and Education Project, "Breastfeeding: A Magical Bond of Love." This project provides WIC staff with culturally appropriate tools to effectively communicate with Hispanic participants about the benefits of breastfeeding. The project targets Hispanic mothers and families to identify and address their barriers, dispel myths, and encourage mothers to continue their historical tradition of breastfeeding.

Background

Hispanics now comprise the largest population group of WIC participants. Numerous breastfeeding educational materials have been translated from English into Spanish for use by the Hispanic population. However, there is a lack of research-based, culturally appropriate educational materials specifically tailored to address the true barriers, influences, support systems, and historical traditions that affect the breastfeeding decisions of Hispanic mothers. The Food and Nutrition Service funded a cooperative agreement with SUMA/Orchard Social Marketing, Inc. to respond to this need.

Method

SUMA/Orchard conducted formative research through one-on-one interviews with Hispanic mothers ($n=253$) and focus groups with fathers ($n=41$), grandmothers ($n=37$), and WIC staff ($n=70$) in different cities, which included:

- Chicago, Illinois
- Wheaton, Illinois
- New York, New York
- Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina
- Carrboro, North Carolina
- Miami, Florida
- Rio Grande Valley, Texas
- San Antonio, Texas
- McAllen, Texas
- Edinburg, Texas
- Orange County, California
- Los Angeles, California

Countries of origin represented in the sample of mothers, fathers, and grandmothers included Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Cuba, Nicaragua, Puerto Rico, Bolivia, Venezuela, Argentina, Panama, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, and Ecuador.

The interviews and focus groups examined cultural practices, family values, support systems, and community networks that are significant factors that determine whether a mother will choose to breastfeed her infant.

Sample Interview and Focus Group Questions

Mothers:

- Thinking back to when you were pregnant, who of the following helped you decide to breastfeed/formula feed? (mother, friend, sister, other family member, husband/partner, doctor, WIC counselor, etc.)
- What have you learned at WIC about feeding your baby that is different from what you may have learned from your mother and grandmother?

Fathers:

- Before or when the baby was born, what kind of conversations did you have with your wife or girlfriend about how to feed the baby?
- What role do you think WIC plays in educating women about breastfeeding and formula feeding?

Grandmothers:

- When your daughter or daughter-in-law was pregnant, what kinds of conversations did you have with her about how to feed her newborn? What kind of advice did you give about either formula or breastfeeding?
- Traditionally, Hispanic mothers breastfeed their children. But recent studies show that the longer they are in the United States, the less likely they are to breastfeed. Why do you think that is?



WIC Staff:

- What messages are most likely to encourage breastfeeding among Latina women?
- Literature reviews show that Latina women who have been here longer tend to breastfeed less. How true is that in your experience?

Major Findings:

- The longer Latina immigrants live in the United States, the more likely they are to think using formula is the American way and therefore feed their babies formula.
- The majority of mothers have basic knowledge of breastfeeding and its advantages.
- Beyond basic knowledge, many mothers do not know the benefits of breastfeeding for themselves or their babies.
- Breast pumps help mothers continue breastfeeding when they return to work.
- Breastfeeding in public is perceived by Latina women to be taboo in the United States, and this perception can be a barrier to breastfeeding.
- First-time mothers need anticipatory guidance about baby's stomach size and feeding needs.
 - Educate mothers that "Dos Cosas" (formula feeding and breastfeeding simultaneously) may interfere with early breastfeeding success.
 - Teach the law of "supply and demand" as it is defined in the video and brochures, and advise mothers to have a feeding plan.
 - Prepare mothers for their hospital stay. Encourage them to ask questions and to get help with proper positioning and latching on; urge them to tell hospital staff they are exclusively breastfeeding.
- Second-time mothers need guidance on breastfeeding. Don't assume they know because they are breastfeeding a second child.

- Provide strategies for managing new family responsibilities.
- Address any challenges mother had breastfeeding her first child.
- As a major influence on a woman's decision to breastfeed, WIC is second only to her own mother or mother-in-law.



Resources

As a result of the project, a family of materials titled "Breastfeeding: A Magical Bond of Love" was developed in Spanish and English. The bilingual campaign includes an innovative video, brochures for moms, dads, and grandmothers, and a poster. The materials were field-tested in a second round of research with mothers, fathers, and grandmothers, as well as with WIC staff.



Contact your local WIC office for more information.
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